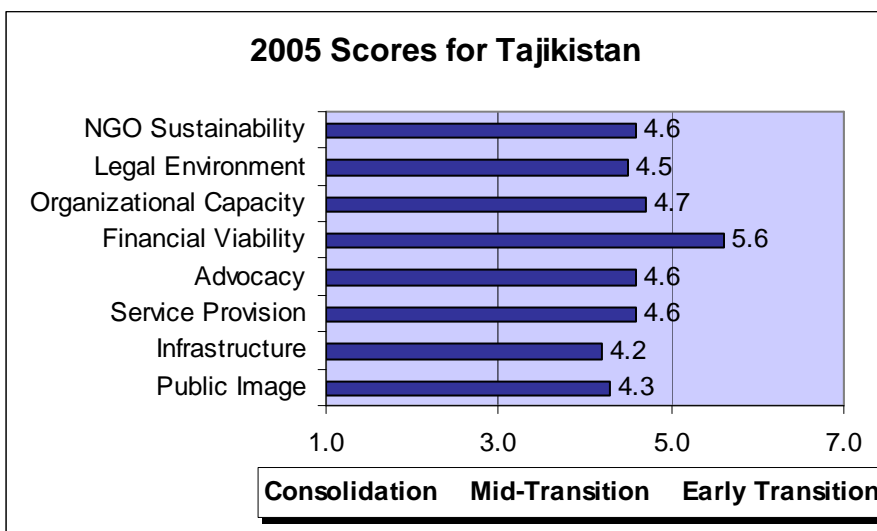


Tajikistan



Capital:
Dushanbe

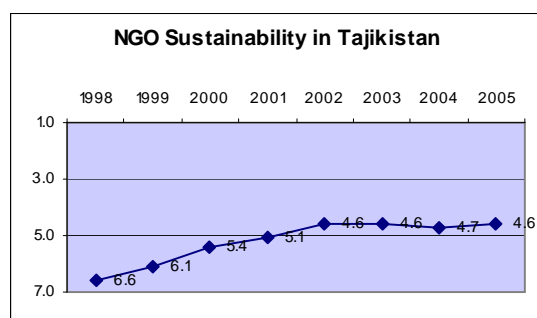
Polity: Republic

Population:
7,320,000

**GDP per capita
(PPP):** \$1,200

NGO SUSTAINABILITY: 4.6

The overall NGO sustainability score did not change over the past year. Deterioration in the Legal Environment score was offset by slight improvements in the Organizational Capacity, Infrastructure, and Public Image dimensions.



Though the legal framework governing NGOs did not change over the past year, government

officials at both the national and local levels took actions that limit NGO activities. Representatives from the NGO community believe that government officials are reacting to the May 2005 uprising in the Andijan region of Uzbekistan and the political events in Kyrgyzstan. Despite these restrictions, NGOs, especially those that are well-developed, are now modifying their mission statements as their capacity to engage in more complex activities grows. These and other improvements resulted in a slightly better score in the Organizational Capacity dimension. The demand for more advanced training programs is growing. Tajikistan's network of civil society support centers (CSSCs) and the newly formed Association of Trainers are working to increase the capacity of trainers and the number of training programs available.

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: 4.5

The legal environment governing NGOs deteriorated over the past year. The laws permit new organizations to register and do not create significant barriers for NGO operations. Reforms are needed, however, as the laws are outdated and often irrelevant. Government institutions often enact resolutions and make decisions concerning NGOs. Similarly, local

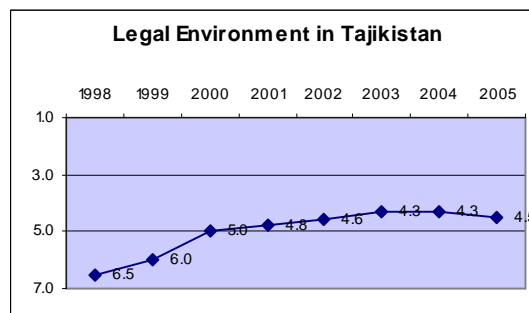
governments often create arbitrary restrictions on NGO activities. For example, local officials frequently require foreign organizations to receive permission from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before they may engage in activities within their community. NGO representatives believe that the restrictions created by local officials are a reaction to the May 2005 events

in the Andijan region of Uzbekistan and the political events in Kyrgyzstan.

Though NGOs often require legal assistance as they register and carry out their activities, access to attorneys trained in NGO law is limited. Most legal services are offered by CSSCs. ICNL and the CSSC staff attorneys are partnering to provide more local attorneys with training in NGO law. Legal assistance and education are both important for facilitating relationships between government institutions and the NGO sector.

Administrative pressure and inspections from various government agencies have become a norm. In addition to inspections by the tax authorities, the Ministries of Justice, Internal Affairs, and other government institutions frequently visit NGOs and CSSCs, taking time and resources away from the organizations' regular activities. While the law limits the frequency with which tax authorities may inspect an organization, the various tax officials may all conduct investigations; there are no

limits on the ability for the Ministry of Justice to inspect NGOs. District and regional governments also require regular reports from NGOs outlining their activities and plans.



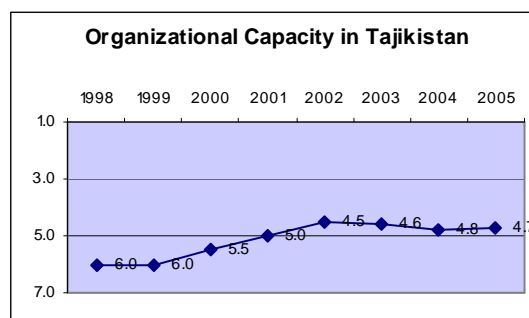
NGOs do not enjoy many tax benefits or incentives. Grants are often subject to numerous taxes. Tax officials often consider income from economic activities as taxable profit, even when it is applied to the organization's non-profit programs. The legal framework fails to clearly exempt income that is directly reinvested into an NGO's program activities.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: 4.7

One barrier that the more developed and advanced organizations face is the loss of staff. The most qualified employees, once they have sufficient knowledge and experience, often leave to join international NGOs or create their own organizations. NGOs are often led by a single charismatic leader, and unable to maintain momentum upon his or her departure.

The most developed organizations understand the importance of constituency-building and try to work with clearly defined target groups, as well as adhere to well-defined missions. Most of these organizations enjoy strong support from both local governments and citizens. These well-developed organizations also engage in strategic planning, and as their capacity increases, they modify their mission statements in order to carry out more complex activities that were not contemplated in their original charters. For example, one organization has changed the focus of its mission statement from providing basic assistance to lesser-developed organizations to providing more sophisticated

training in strategic planning and other matters. Many lesser-developed organizations, especially those in the rural communities, are more flexible with their already broad mission statements, allowing them to access support for a variety of activities. Many organizations lack sufficient capacity to align their missions with the donor resources available.



The majority of organizations is transparent, has a clearly defined management structure and delineates the different responsibilities of the Boards of Directors and staff. Some NGOs,

however, choose to not fully disclose their staffing and budget information to local officials. Boards of Directors often exist in name only. The majority of organizations has a small permanent staff and hires professionals as funding becomes available. Over the past year, many of the leading NGOs continued to develop their volunteer staff and promote volunteerism, recognizing that the use of volunteers increases the competitiveness of their proposals, improves their public image, and builds their constituencies. Volunteers are motivated to support NGO activities in part by the opportunity to learn more about the NGO sector and to acquire knowledge and skills that will lead to additional opportunities.

Most organizations have basic office and communications equipment. Generally, donor support does not provide resources for replacing older technology. Access to the internet is better than last year, though it is sufficiently limited to remain an obstacle to

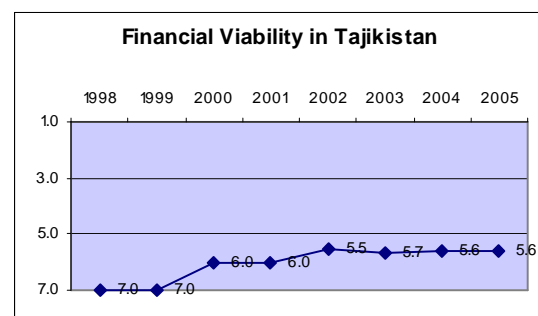
information sharing. In many regions, use of equipment and the internet is hampered by irregular energy supplies. Many organizations have to rely on the CSSCs for technology, though traveling to access such resources is costly. NGOs have little or no access to software and supplies. Many organizations do not yet have an appropriate record keeping system.

The most talented, educated and energetic members of the labor force believe that the NGO and business sectors provide the greatest opportunities to develop their skills. Government employees who are unsatisfied with their professional development often shift to the NGO sector, which allows them to combine their interests in research with carrying out projects at the community level. Publications, surveys and research produced by NGOs are often utilized by international organizations, and in a few cases, the government.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY: 5.6

NGOs generally depend on international support for their activities. Domestic philanthropy does not create grant opportunities for NGOs; instead, businesses and individuals provide charitable and humanitarian support directly to organizations. The current legal framework fails to promote philanthropy. Though the law permits individuals and corporations to take deductions for their donations and support, frequently they do not to avoid unwanted attention from corrupt tax authorities. The central government has a line item in the state budget for social partnership, though it is not significant. As a whole, the NGO sector has yet to be viewed as a viable partner in addressing community issues, and it has little interaction with religious institutions. Mobilization of local resources and the formation of partnerships generally require great explanation to those involved of the advantages of forming partnerships. Few organizations are financially sustainable, and their registered non-government and not-for-profit charters do not permit them to engage in economic activities.

Organizations do not publish annual reports in fear that it will lead to harassment by the tax authorities. Even opening a bank account attracts unwanted attention from corrupt tax collectors. Similarly, many organizations are vague when reporting their activities to local authorities. Government authorities pay special attention to those organizations conducting activities such as voter education, consumer rights, human rights, and others. The majority of organizations depends on donor funding and has adopted accounting, monitoring and reporting systems that meet donor requirements. Few however, conduct regular audits of their programs or finances. NGOs,



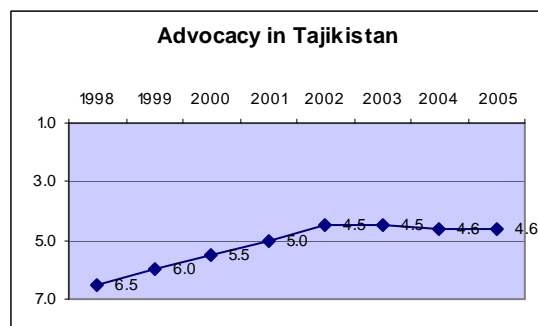
especially micro-finance organizations, have acquired sufficient experience in managing their finances.

NGOs must improve their fundraising skills. The CSSCs offer training on grant-writing and proposal development, but organizations must

take advantage of these opportunities. Though the central government encourages cooperation on social issues, district authorities lack the experience and desire to partner with NGOs, viewing them as little more than a potential source of funding for infrastructure and social projects.

ADVOCACY: 4.6

The government recognizes the role that NGOs play in social development and demonstrates a willingness to develop partnerships, especially at the district level. Government institutions, however, are not ready to make a significant contribution beyond offering moral support and in-kind donations. District governments have begun to value NGO activities. In some districts, officials have asked NGOs to train their municipal staff; some district governments have even made financial contributions to support NGO projects that focus on infrastructure rehabilitation and construction



NGOs were successful with a few of their advocacy initiatives, including the campaigns for

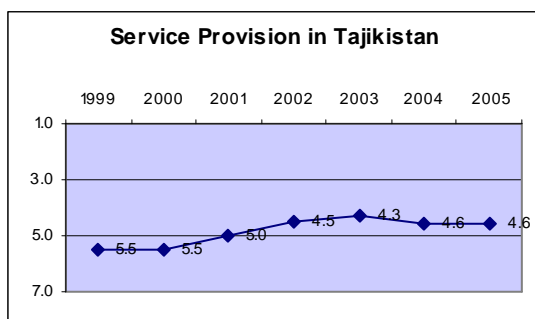
a new law on micro-credit organizations, a law on environmental expertise, and others. The May 2005 events in the Uzbek city of Andijan had a significant impact on local human rights and election monitoring organizations. Afterwards, the Tajik government began supervising NGO activities, and the Ministries of Justice and Internal Affairs and the tax authorities increased their inspections as well. Local authorities now demand that they be informed of any visits by representatives of the international organizations, especially in the area of human rights.

Though NGOs understand the concept of lobbying and advocacy, the NGO sector is incapable of influencing policy decisions of the Parliament or other branches of government due to the authoritative character of government. NGOs have advocacy experts who are capable by international standards, but communication with the government is one-way, not an interactive dialogue. One successful advocacy campaign in which NGOs were involved was the national campaign for the elimination of the death penalty. Most NGOs are passive and have not achieved significant results in the area of NGO law reform.

SERVICE PROVISION: 4.6

NGOs provide a wide range of services in areas such as economic analysis, education, specialized training, legal consultation, construction, public opinion surveys, micro-credit, environmental protection and others. A number of organizations are involved in traditional handicrafts, agriculture and other economic activities. Most organizations are capable of designing projects, whether it be producing goods or providing services that respond to the specific needs of different

groups. Strategic planning is generally based on priorities identified by surveys, analytic exercise, and other assessment tools. Publications produced by NGOs are unable to reach all of their intended audience due to the limited editions and inadequate funding for distribution. Many publications are technical and serve a number of specialized organizations.



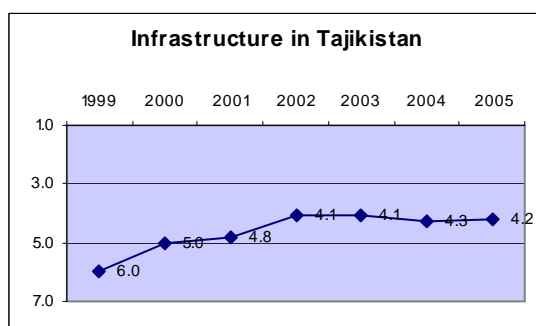
NGOs are still unable to operate without international support, and few are able to support themselves by providing services for a fee. The law limits the ability for NGOs to engage in economic activities, though specialized professional associations, such as the

Association of Auditors and Accountants, often generate significant revenues. Some organizations provide training for a fee.

The government has recognized that NGOs have distinct expertise and are potential partners in addressing issues such as health care, education, and local infrastructure. Local officials are particularly aware that NGOs are often able to mobilize funds that local governments do not have. At times, government officials expect that NGO resources will supplement the costs of addressing social issues when the government does not have sufficient funding. Collaboration with the government, however, is limited by the lack of funding.

INFRASTRUCTURE: 4.2

Tajikistan's CSSCs are the key to NGO development. Their office equipment, communications system, training, ICNL-trained attorneys, and other resources are in constant demand. In some regions, a CSSC has created networks of support organizations that function as mini-CSSCs and provide many services to organizations in the rural and remote regions.



Though some organizations administer and re-grant foreign funding, none qualify as a local grant-maker. NGOs have formed coalitions that have produced numerous results. The coalition

of micro-credit organizations lobbied successfully for a number of small changes in laws regulating micro-credit activities. NGOs do exchange and share information, especially those that belong to an Association or confederation of organizations. The National Association of CSSCs is now registered and plans to become a mechanism to promote even more information sharing.

NGOs in Tajikistan do not have access to sufficient training. One goal driving the newly formed Association of Trainers is to improve the capacity of trainers and increase the number of programs available. The government and public are also in need of greater access to training programs to increase the level of professionalism. Training programs are not always available in the state language, and the demand for training programs in the Tajik language is increasing.

PUBLIC IMAGE: 4.3

Due to the commercial nature of the independent media and the unwillingness of the state-run media, the NGO sector is unable to enjoy a collaborative partnership with media outlets. In addition, the commercial and tax laws prevent stronger ties with the business

community. Many in the business community perceive NGOs as semi-governmental organizations. Local officials at times contribute to NGO development by providing in-kind donations such as the use of office space or facilities for events. Though government officials

understand that NGOs represent society, they do not always trust them. Health care organizations often have the strongest relations with government officials. NGOs often prefer not to advertise their activities and accomplishments because they fear criminal charges and increased scrutiny from the tax officials.

Overall, the public is aware of the NGO activities in their communities; in fact, the public's perception of the NGO sector is based on their interactions with the humanitarian organizations working in their community. As a result, numerous communities have mobilized support for the NGO activities in their regions, and the public has a greater understanding of the principles of "not-for-profit."

